

# SAFEGUARDING YOURSELF AGAINST FAKE NEWS

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National Library Board  
Singapore



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- 1) Characteristics Of Fake News**
- 2) Impact of Fake News**
- 3) Psychological Factors of How Fake News Spread**
- 4) Safeguarding Measures**

# 1) CHARACTERISTICS OF FAKE NEWS

# CHARACTERISTICS OF FAKE NEWS

**Deliberate  
inaccuracy**



Source: [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)

Disinformation reaches people **six times faster** than factually accurate news.

Vosoughi, et.al. (2018) *The spread of true and false news online*. [ScienceMag](https://www.sciencemag.org).

**Designed to lure  
readers into sharing  
them**

**Stir readers' emotions,  
prejudices or biases**

# Evolving technology makes it harder to distinguish what is real or fake



Source: VICE (YouTube)

Link: <https://youtu.be/p7-B8S734T4>



# The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) platforms like ChatGPT makes it easy for anyone to generate false statements

## The Next Great Misinformation Superspreader: How ChatGPT Could Spread Toxic Misinformation At Unprecedented Scale

*We tempted the AI chatbot with 100 false narratives from our catalog of Misinformation Fingerprints™. 80% of the time, the AI chatbot delivered eloquent, false and misleading claims about significant topics in the news, including COVID-19, Ukraine and school shootings.*

Source: [NewsGuard](#)

A fake news frenzy: why ChatGPT could be disastrous for truth in journalism

*Emily Bell*



A platform that can mimic humans' writing with no commitment to the truth is a gift for those who benefit from disinformation. We need to regulate its use now

Source: [The Guardian](#)

- As an AI language model, ChatGPT has its fair share of usefulness and abuse potential
- Regarding fake news and misinformation, it is important to regulate its use and understand countermeasures to identify AI-written articles



# FAKE NEWS EVOLVES QUICKLY TO POPULAR PLATFORMS

## **TikTok a major source of disinformation on Ukraine war, experts say**



"Videos from past conflicts being recycled, genuine footage presented in a misleading way, things that are so obviously false but still get tens of millions of views."

"...fake livestreams in which users pretended to be on the ground in Ukraine, but were actually using footage from other conflicts or even video games - and then asking for money to support their "reporting".

Source: [CNA](#)

## ***Influence Networks in Russia Misled European Users, TikTok Says***

The covert and coordinated campaign was disclosed in a new report that also addressed misinformation, fake accounts and moderation struggles.

Source: [New York Times](#) (9 Feb 2023)

"1,704 TikTok accounts made a coordinated and covert effort to influence public discourse about the war in Ukraine"



## 2) IMPACT OF FAKE NEWS

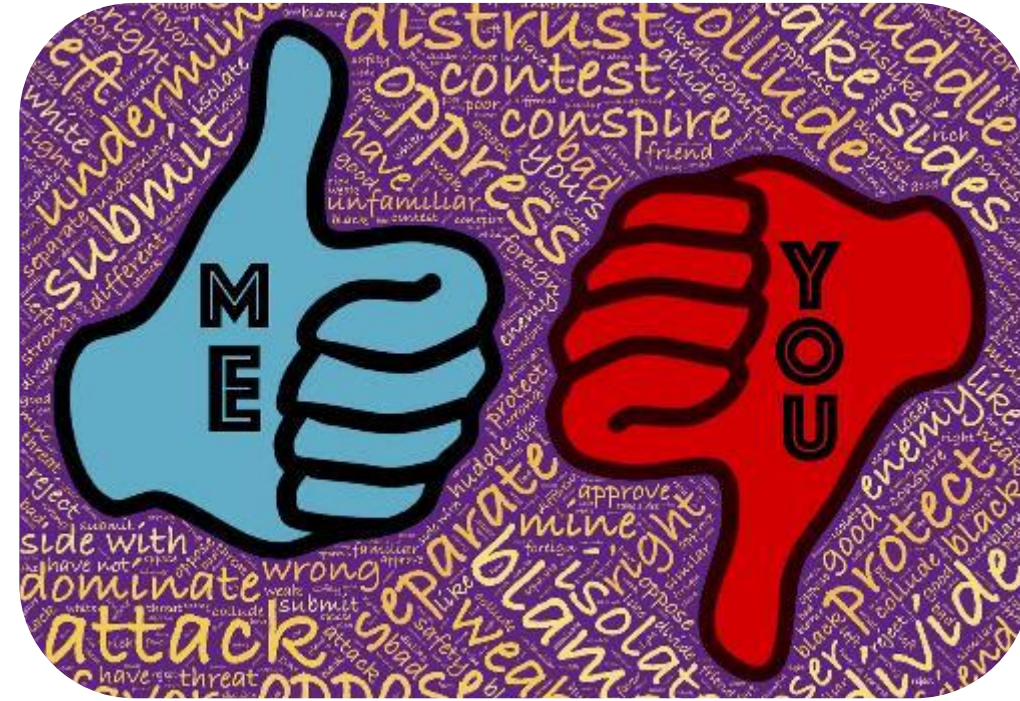
# IMPACT OF FAKE NEWS

**Fake news can have serious real-world consequences:**



Source: [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)

Create fear and panic



Source: [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)

Damage racial and religious harmony



Source: [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)

Damage to groups and organisations



Source: [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)

Waste precious time and resources

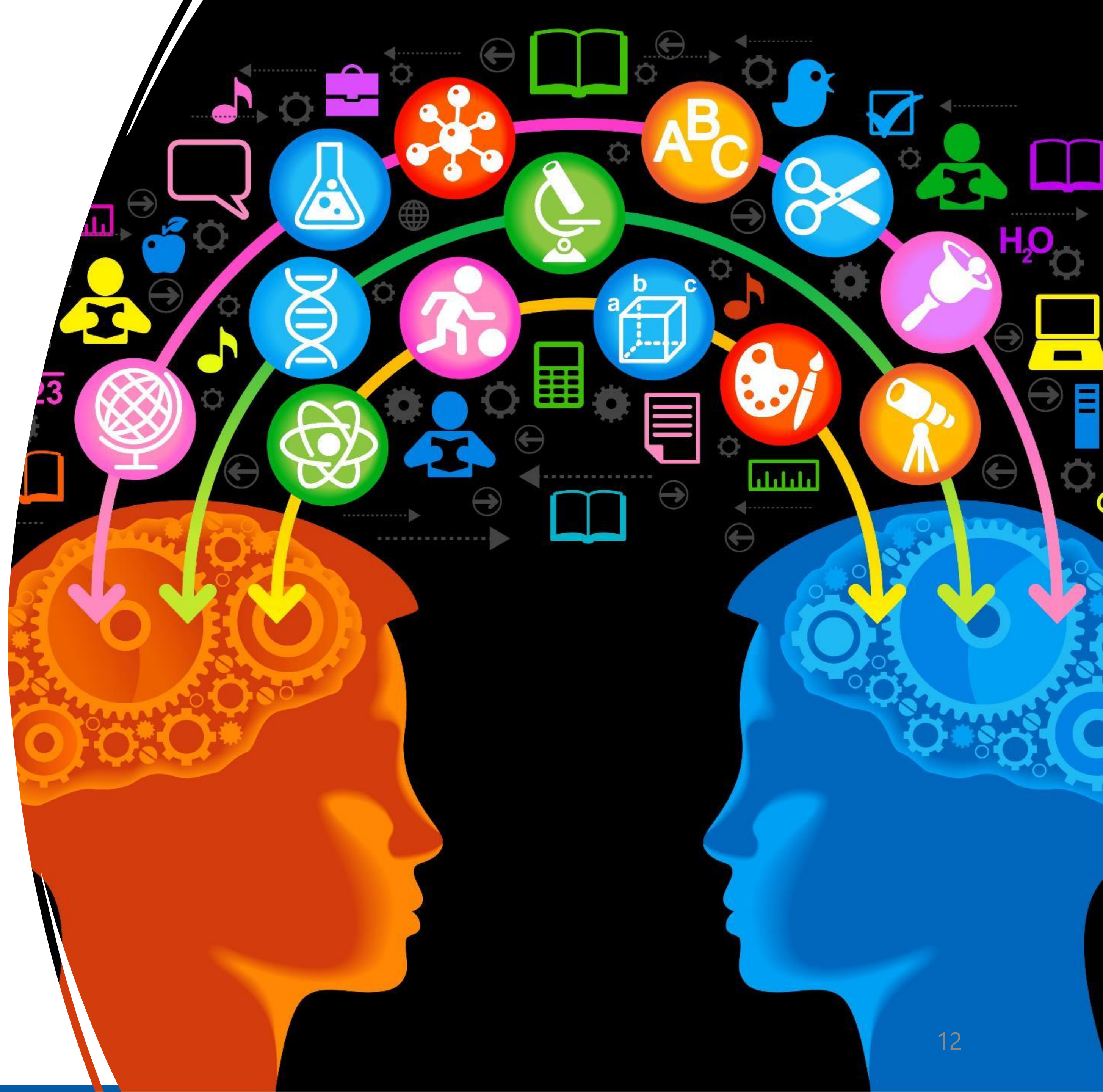


### **3) PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF HOW FAKE NEWS SPREAD**



# HEURISTICS & COGNITIVE BIASES

- With so much information around us to process, our brains use mental shortcuts known as **heuristics** to help us make decisions quickly and make sense of the world around us
- However, these shortcuts could lead to **cognitive biases**, which affects *everyone* in different ways, some more negatively than others





# CONFIRMATION BIAS

- When we favour information that confirm our current beliefs, such as social media posts and forwarded messages that may not be true or factual
- Serious cases can lead to self-radicalisation



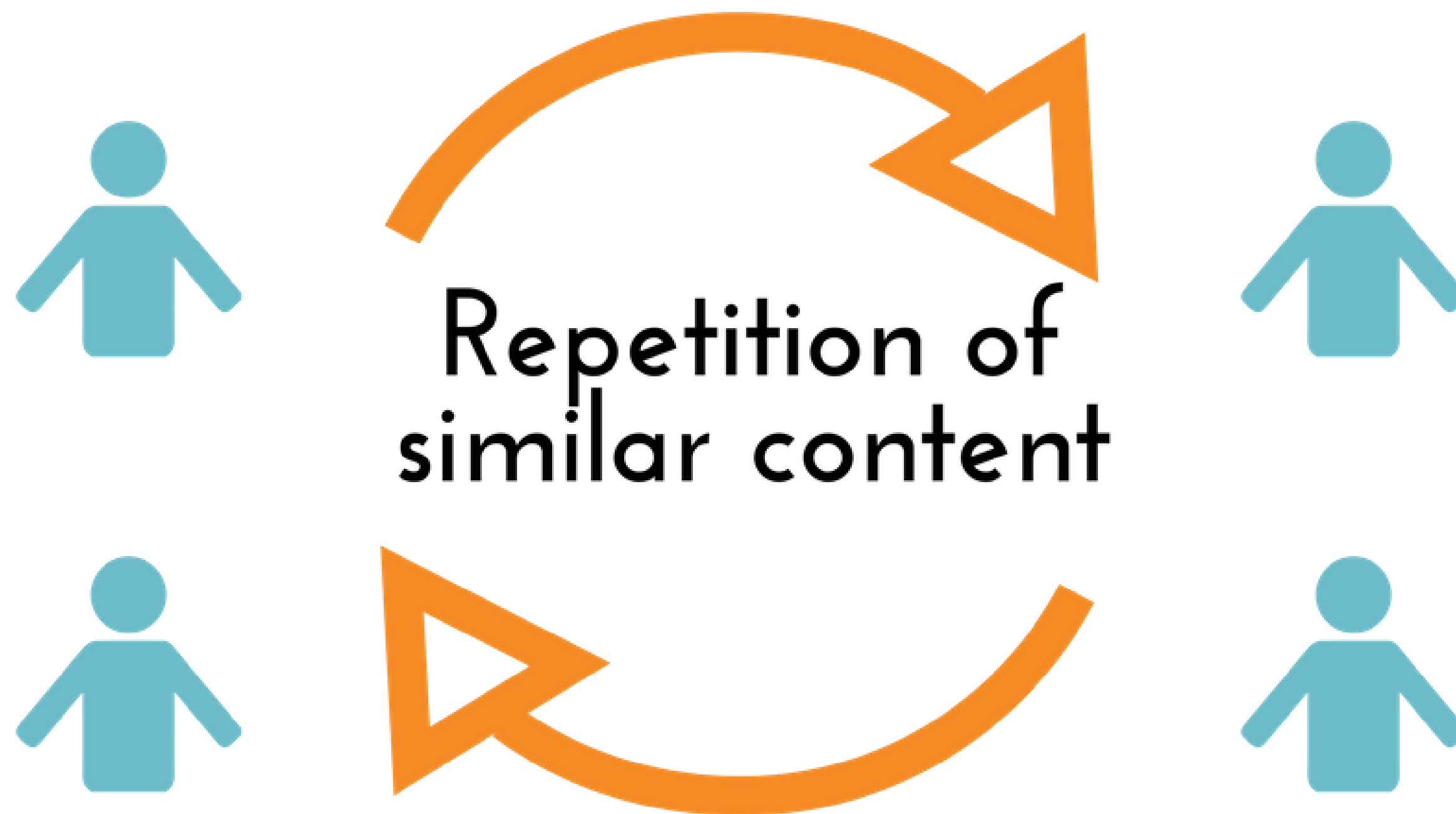
**Self-radicalisation main terror threat in Singapore; far-right extremism an emerging concern: ISD report**



Source: [CNA](#)

# Confirmation Bias & Echo Chambers

- A situation where **beliefs and ideas are reinforced** through repetition of a closed system that does not allow for the free movement of alternative or competing ideas or concepts.



1) Algorithms in search engines and social media amplify the effect

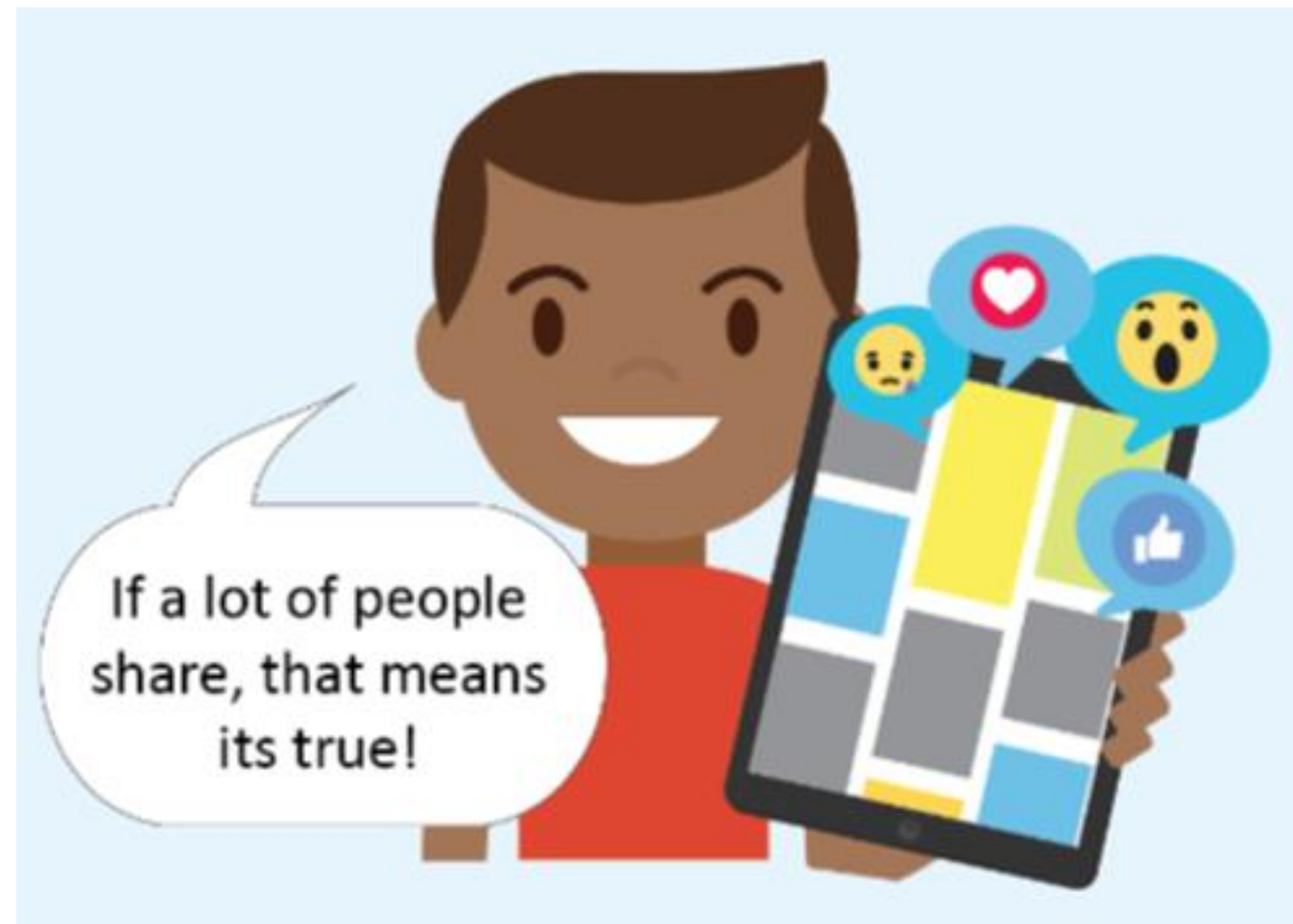
2) The radicalised individual ignores or rejects any information that casts doubt on his/her beliefs

Source: Cornell University Library  
[http://guides.library.cornell.edu/evaluate\\_news/bias](http://guides.library.cornell.edu/evaluate_news/bias)



# BANDWAGON EFFECT

- When we agree and follow how others feel or believe in. The more people that believe in it, the more likely we are to follow them.



Coronavirus: Politicians, supermarkets urge calm amid panic-buying of groceries



1 of 7 A queue at the FairPrice outlet at the HDB Hub in Toa Payoh on Feb 7, 2020. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

Source: [The Straits Times](https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/coronavirus-panic-buying)



# OPTIMISTIC BIAS

- When we overestimate our abilities and believe we are less susceptible to risks than others



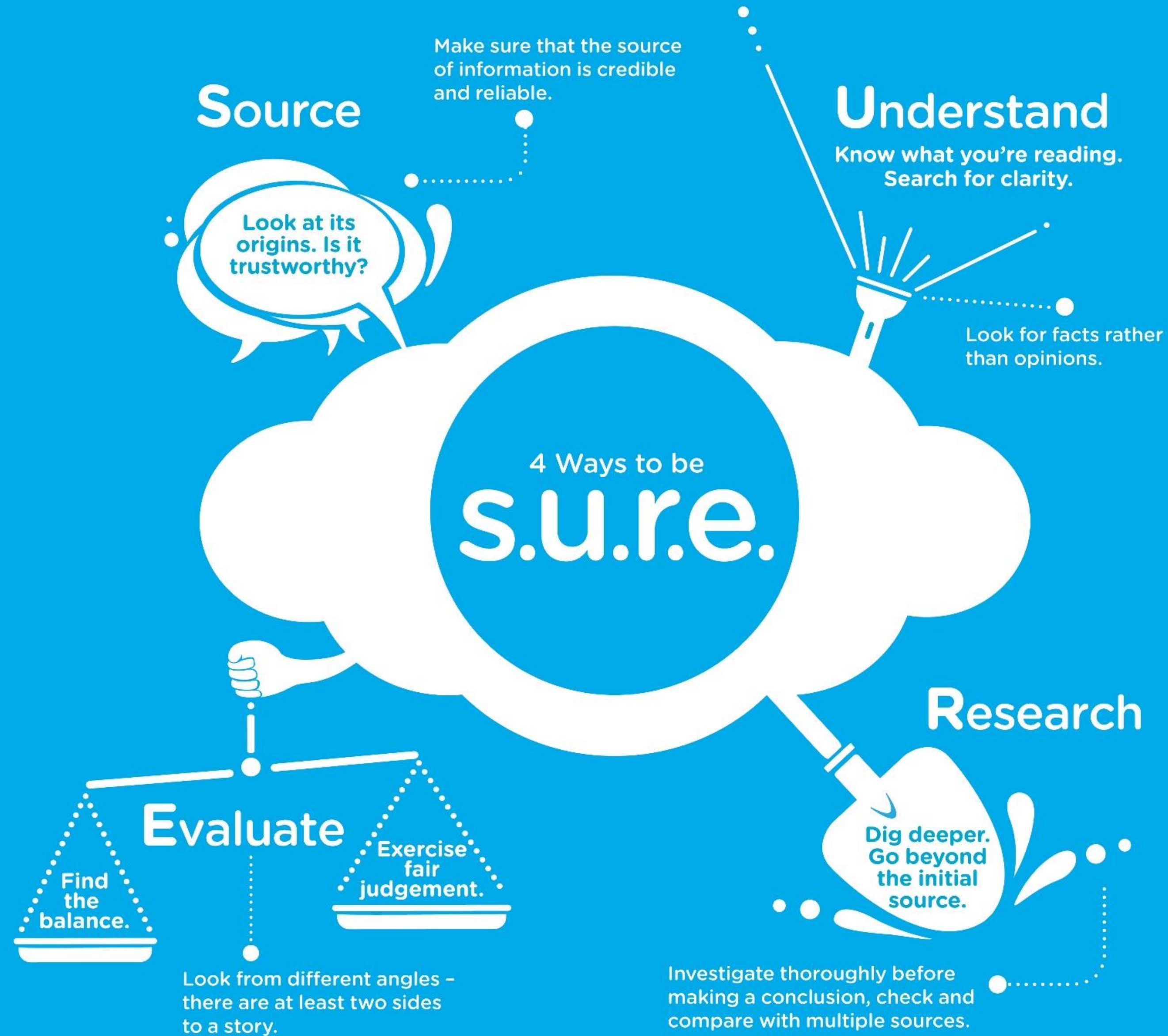
4 in 5 Singaporeans confident in spotting fake news but 90 per cent wrong when put to the test: Survey



Source: [The Straits Times](#)



## 4) SAFEGUARDING MEASURES







**(Video) Be SURE Before You Share**

Link: <https://youtu.be/JNFnPqTTPlc>

# SAFEGUARDING TIPS (SgSecure)



Video [link](#)



Video [link](#)



# MENTAL SAFEGUARDING MEASURES

## How to Overcome Confirmation Bias?

ONE



**FIND OTHER SOURCES** Look for ways to challenge what you see. Seek out information from a range of sources.

TWO



**TALK ABOUT IT** Discuss your thoughts with others. Surround yourself with a diverse group of people, and don't be afraid to listen to their views.

THREE



**ANTICIPATE** Embrace surprises when they happen. When you feel that something didn't go as expected, consider other options.



# MENTAL SAFEGUARDING MEASURES

## How to Overcome Bandwagon Effect?

ONE



**RECOGNISE** Be wary of viral and widely-shared news. Read news directly from the news website instead of a social media feed, where the number of likes and shares are displayed.

TWO



**TAKE SOME TIME ALONE** Make decisions when you are not surrounded by many people, so that you can think more clearly on your own.



# MENTAL SAFEGUARDING MEASURES

## How to Overcome Optimistic Biases

- ✓ **Be aware** of our **tendency to overestimate** our knowledge, and **tendency to assume** the validity of events based on past knowledge.
- ✓ Be open-minded and **seek out further information** when in doubt.



# RECAP

- We can recognize fake news based on their characteristics
- The impact of fake news can be severe if left unchecked
- Use the S.U.R.E. steps to assess suspicious articles or messages
- Mental safeguards are important in the long-term to help yourself and others

**Be S.U.R.E. Before You Share!**





**[sure.nlb.gov.sg](http://sure.nlb.gov.sg)**  
**Email: [sure@nlb.gov.sg](mailto:sure@nlb.gov.sg)**

# Thank you

